
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CURRENT RESEARCH IN BIOLOGY AND MEDICINE

ISSN: 2455-944X

www.darshanpublishers.com

DOI:10.22192/ijcrbm

Volume 3, Issue 4 - 2018

Review Article

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22192/ijcrbm.2018.03.04.006>

A review on Fast Foods and Family Lifestyle

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Abstract

Fast food is the term given to foods that are prepared and served very quickly. While any meal with low preparation time can be considered as fast food, typically the term refers to food sold in a restaurants or store with pre-heated or pre-cooked ingredients, and served to the customers in a packaged form for take-out or take away. Today busy work, technological society has contributed to drastic changes in the way people eat. The dual-career and single parent families are becoming more common. As people juggle careers, child care, social and professional meetings, education and recreation, the traditional meals at home are often skipped, eaten on the run or through together quickly. As a result, food preparers in fast food centres have taken over the responsibility of preparing foods for families and those who do not have time to prepare foods. The paper reviewed its implications in family life because of the changing life of the families now

Keywords: Fast food, customers, technological society, family life.

Introduction

Concept of Fast Food

Fast food is the term given to foods that are prepared and served very quickly. They were first popularized in the 1950s, in the United States (Ejike and Obeagu, 2018; Talwar, 2003). While any meal with low preparation time can be considered as fast food, typically the term refers to food sold in a restaurants or store with pre-heated or pre-cooked ingredients, and served to the customers in a packaged form for take-out or take away. Schlosser (2008) stated that fast food centers are universally not a new phenomenon. Their scope includes any meal which is fundamentally prepared for commercial purposes. This is quite unlike meals prepared in the home and eaten by family members, relations, friends etc. without being sold to them. According to Jakle (1999) fast food refer to food

that can be prepared and served very quickly. Talwar (2003) explained that from inception fast foods have been designed to be taken on the go, often do not require a traditional cutlery, and is eaten as a finger food.

Common menu items of fast foods include fish and chips, sandwiches, hamburger, fried chicken, French fries pizza, ice cream etc. Martha (2015) stated that fast foods are characterized as quick, easily accessible and cheap alternatives to home cooked meals. In an effort to meet the needs of more nutrition conscience of consumers, some fast food restaurants have salad bars, whole grains, buns, grilled chicken and lean meats. In addition, a number of fast food restaurants provide an information sheet on the nutritional contents of the food on their menu. Achinihu and Ukozor (2011) stated that fast food business (FFB) offer diverse fresh, ready-made meals to persons who

are either caught up with time to meal choice. The authors further stated that unmarried workers without house helps or cooks are more prone to patronizing the business. Meals/types of foods offered by fast food industries can vary from one locality to another depending on the popular meals of the people suitable for the individuals.

Fast food business is presently more closely connected with urban development where there is more gainful employment than in rural communities and villages where patronage is almost indispensable especially in developed urban cities and towns where a good number of youths migrate to, in search of jobs (Asomugha *et al.*, 2017).

Origin of Fast Food

Philip *et al.* (2007) stated that fast food is not only synonymous with the American life style, but also had its origin in the United States. To some degree the belief is understandable on traditional cultures that the American media had.

Restaurants have been around in some form for most of human civilization, but they usually catered to travelers. Ancient Greece and Rome inns and taverns generally served food to people who had a reason to be away from home. This trend continued for quite some time. Although taverns and coffee houses were popular place to gather and share beverages in the 17th century, the idea of eating out for fun did not take off in western society until the late 18th century. Talwar (2003) recorded that McDonald's was the first restaurants to use assembly line system. Some people think of white castle as the first chain. According to Schlosser (2008) modern history of fast food in America began on July 7, 1912 with the opening of a fast food restaurant called the automat in New York. The automat was a cafeteria with its prepared foods behind small glass windows and coin-operated slots. Numerous automat restaurants were quickly built about the country to deal with the demand. Automates remained extremely popular throughout the 1920s and 1930's. The company also popularized the notion of "take-out" food with their slogan "less work for mothers".

Riches (2008) recorded the American company white castle is generally credited with opening the second fast food outlet in Wichita Kansas in 1921. Among its innovations, the company allowed customers to see the food being prepared. White castle later added five

holes to each beef patty to increase its surface area and speed cooking time white castle was successful from its inception and spawned numerous competitors.

Harvey (2003) stated that McDonald's which started it all is now the world's largest fast food chain. The industry is growing globally as well. The author further explained Americans increasingly hectic lifestyles make cooking at home a challenge, so the restaurant and food industry enjoys steady growth. In 2012, restaurant joy growth rose to 3.4 percent and this number is expected to rise in the coming years. Restaurants employ approximately 13.5 million workers. These numbers suggests steady employment for workers.

The Origin of Fast Food in Nigeria

The fast food industry in Nigeria started from a very humble beginning in the 1970s' Mr. Biggs was the first major entrant and it started as an in-house office kitchen service to staff of organizations whose work schedule gave little or no time to go out for lunch (Bose, 2011). But the demand for its products soon sent it into the open market where it remains a strong player among many others.

The need to provide fast, on-the-go meals for those in hectic, busy work and lifestyle soon made the sector an attractive one to many entrepreneurs, investors and business people. As a result, small food canteen owners got inspired and pursued funding to expand to larger multi-brand players in the industry.

Igbokwe (2005) observed that fast food business is growing. According to him the business keeps expanding and gaining new outlets. He pointed out that many Nigerians have either established or planned to establish a fast food business. Carroll and Miller (1982) projected that the fast food phenomenon would continue to be part of Americans in the future. This may also become the case of Nigeria because of the way people now patronize fast food joints and are becoming "addicted" to fast foods. The rate at which people now consume such foods is on the increase. Konwea and Akindutire (2006) confirmed this when they stated that there was increased marketing of fast foods and fast food advertisement to children and that the number of high income households due to upward review of salary correspondingly increased the number of restaurant and take home meals. Eating out has become a routine for many people partly because the time for preparing meals at home has reduced due to

changing lifestyle. Also some Nigerians seem to associate the eating of fast foods with high prestige or a high class value and as a lifestyle of the affluent or a way of displaying affluence. Many petrol stations in Nigeria have convenience stores which sell pre-packaged sandwiches doughnuts and hot foods. Also traditional street food and snacks are available from small operators and independent vendors operating from a cart, table, portable grill or motor vehicles.

Today busy work, technological society has contributed to drastic changes in the way people eat. The dual-career and single parent families are becoming more common. As people juggle careers, child care, social and professional meetings, education and recreation, the traditional meals at home are often skipped, eaten on the run or through together quickly. As a result, food preparers in fast food centres have taken over the responsibility of preparing foods for families and those who do not have time to prepare foods.

Igbokwe (2005) observed that in the past whenever a woman wanted to get something from her husband, she would prepared a delicious meal for him and use it as an opportunity when the man is satisfied. The situation, these days is that whenever a man agrees to give his wife a threat, in most cases it is to a fast food outlet that he takes her to. He observed that Nigerians appreciate quality, they now cultivate the culture of driving out with their family members to eat. Also children when celebrating birthdays or want to be rewarded for good performance in exams or good behaviour at home want to be taken to a fast food restaurant. It is concluded that fast food centers or joints are opened as money making ventures.

Importance of Fast Food

Bose (2011) stated the importance of fast food as following:

Saves time: In today's busy lifestyle there is nothing better than getting a readymade meal.

Accessible: Fast food centers are very accessible, one can find them everywhere, in the city and even in the provinces has fast food restaurants, so everybody can have the chance to enjoy these foods.

It is cheap alternative: Bose (2011) recorded that if one lives alone, it is cheaper to buy a meal at the fast food restaurants than cooking it at home. The author

further noted that one can find some options on the menu of a fast food restaurant that could be healthy. Example salads, bread products made from wheat, lean meat and boiled preparations are healthier options instead of fried preparation. One of the reasons why families go for fast food is the desire to relax and enjoy relative peace outside the home and office environment.

Fast foods offer various choices: A wide assortment of fast food style lets one experience foods from various cultures so that one does not need to spend exorbitant amounts of money at full service restaurant.

Negative Effect of Fast Foods

According to Bose (2011) the greatest negative effect of fast food is that fast food is unhealthier than home cooked meals as they contain higher amounts of salts, fats and calories.

Irregular timing of eating: A healthy person need to eat at a proper time which fast food does not have. Fast food can be consumed at anytime or some time twice or thrice a day, but home cooked food is served at proper time that provides opportunity to take rest after eating.

Lack of family gathering: Eating of fast food does not provide family members opportunity to sit together and eat at one place. Everyone can buy and eat walking on the way driving in a vehicle and during his/her work in office. The satisfaction which a combined meal provides is lacking.

Expensive: Fast food consumes too much money as compared to home prepared food. Low income people or parents can hardly afford continuous use of fast foods.

Lack of essential nutrients: An adequate food contains all essential elements which are necessary for human development fast food does not have all those elements fast food contain some elements in high quality while others are absent. So fast food does not fulfill all needs of body requirement and sometimes causes disorders.

Obesity: Obesity means having too much body fat. Fast foods are high in calories and sugar that contribute to increased weight gain. Even small amounts of fast food can increase one's calories intake considerably. People who consume fast food are less

likely to eat fruits, vegetable milk etc. This change in eating habits can easily lead to obesity.

Unhealthy and uneconomical for families: Fast foods are healthier than home cooked meals as contain higher amounts of salts, fats and calories and is more expensive and uneconomical.

Fast foods are seen as a factor that is making a number of families spends less and less time together. The hectic and tight schedule in lifestyle made it absolutely inconvenient for most workers and parents to cook meal at home. Edwards (2010) stated that family meals have visibly diminished a factor that is making a number of families spend less and less time together. Family meal time is a medium that allows or gives the family members an opportunity to come together and share their experiences. The negative effects of fast food on family lifestyle and economy are increasing day by day. The negative effects are greater than its positive effects on the family members including children, adolescent, pregnant mothers, civil servants.

Concept of Family

Anyakoha and Eluwa (2008) define family as a group of persons united by ties of marriage, blood or adoption and characterized by common residence and economic co-operation. It is the function of the family to provide for the family members their basic need such as food, shelter, warmth and clothing, love and companionship, protection, support etc. According to Hornby (2006) a family is a group consisting of one or two parents and their children. It is also a group consisting of one or two parents their children and close relations. According to Bernard and stone (2014) a family can be male and female siblings living together, a parent and child or children. Male and female who are related by marriage but have child or children who adopt a child.

Family Lifestyle

The family lifestyle is basically fashioned by the family's tradition. Nelson (2009) stated that family lifestyles is the way in which people interact with others, the kinds of work people pursue, the hobbies and personal interest one enjoys, the habit one develops and the decision to many and raise a good family or remain single.

William (2009) explained lifestyle as a set of attitudes, habits or possession associated with a particular person or group. Their lifestyle can be healthy or unhealthy based on food choice, activity level and

behaviour. A positive lifestyle can bring one happiness, while a negative lifestyle can lead to sadness, illness and depression. Angeline (2011) explained that lifestyle is a way of living of individual families (households) in societies. Lifestyle manifests in coping with one physical psychological, social and economic environment on a day to day basis. Lifestyle is expressed in both work and leisure behaviour patterns and on an individual basis in activities, attitudes, interests, opinions, values and allocation of income it also reflects peoples self image or self concept. Life style is a composite of motivations, needs and wants, and is influenced by factors such as culture, family, reference groups and social class. The term lifestyle can denote the interest opinions, behaviours and behavioural orientations of an individuals attitudes, was of life, value or world view (Angeline, 2011) more interestingly a healthy or unhealthy lifestyle will most likely be transmitted across generations.

According to Paxson (2002) when a 0-3years old child has a mother who practices a healthy lifestyle, the child will be 27% more likely to become healthy and adopt the same lifestyle. For instance high income parents are more likely to eat organic food, have time to exercise, and provide the best living condition to their children. On the other hand, low income parents are more likely to participate in unhealthy activities such as smoking to help them release poverty related stress and depression. Parents are the first teacher for every child. Everything that parent do will be very likely to be transferred to their children through the learning process. No matter what a persons lifestyle happens to be, there are ways to improve upon troublesome areas. When living a life with positive lifestyle that covers his/her typical actions and surroundings on a daily basis. Some of the things that go into making one lifestyle.

Conclusion

Fast food is the term given to foods that are prepared and served very quickly. Today busy work, technological society has contributed to drastic changes in the way people eat. As people juggle careers, child care, social and professional meetings, education and recreation, the traditional meals at home are often skipped, eaten on the run or through together quickly. As a result, food preparers in fast food centres have taken over the responsibility of preparing foods for families and those who do not have time to prepare foods. The fast food will affect the health and family life because of the break in the relationship associated with foods prepared in the families.

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How to cite this article:

Ejike Blessing Ngozika and Obeagu Emmanuel Ifeanyi. (2018). A review on Fast Foods and Family Lifestyle. *Int. J. Curr. Res. Biol. Med.* 3(4): 26-30.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22192/ijcrbm.2018.03.04.006>